



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CHAIRMAN RIDLEY-THOMAS ASKS FOR STRATEGIES TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**LOS ANGELES** –Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas has requested the creation of a taskforce made up of law enforcement, public health, mental health officials and the countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (CCJCC) to develop a comprehensive plan on curbing firearm-related violence in Los Angeles.

According to the Los Angeles County Coroner, 75 percent of all deaths in Los Angeles County in 2009 were caused by use of a firearm, a trend that is mirrored nationally. In addition, a 2010 report by the Department of Public Health identified homicide as the leading cause of death for 15-44-year-olds. Since 1982, there have been 62 mass shootings and more than 300 million guns in this country—nearly enough for every man, woman and child.

“The Newtown, Connecticut massacre is yet another horrific example of the gun-related violence we have endured as a nation,” said Chairman Ridley-Thomas. “Just the other day, I met with a grieving mother who lost her 14-year-old daughter in a senseless shooting. We cannot continue to adhere to policies that allow such easy access to guns. We can respect the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment but we must also endeavor to save lives.”

The motion, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors Tuesday, will identify strategies to reduce the stigma related to mental health illness and mental health treatment. The motion also calls for enhanced enforcement of existing laws regulating the possession, sale and purchase of high caliber, high capacity weapons as well as make recommendations on revisions to existing laws and regulations governing the sale, purchase, transfer and possession of firearms and ammunition.

The Board also requested that the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) will conduct a survey of each of the 80 school districts to make sure they are in compliance with their school safety plan. In addition, the county's state and federal legislative advocates will report back with proposed legislative solutions for the county.

"I am hopeful that out of this senseless tragedy, we will find the courage and resolve to end this epidemic of firearm related violence," said Chairman Ridley-Thomas.

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